MMR_0041 Charles F. Martin who founded the Fraternal Order of Empire Builders..later the Great Northern Railway Historical Society.

Achievement Program's MMR No. 41

Charles F. Martin
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Charles Martin is one of the old timers to become a MASTER MODEL RAILROADER. Following is his interesting history as told by him.

"Had my father perhaps, explained to me about girls before showing me the 'Little-Railroad-Engines' at the Chicago Century of Progress in 1933, my life-style might have been patterned in another fashion. As it happened, however, the steam locomotive, to the puzzled consternation of my wife and three children, has about the same attraction for me as a pear-shaped derriere.

"By 1935, I was a confirmed railroad 'nut', modeling C&NW power in 17/64s, and otherwise 'soaking up' the various facets of the operations in the Chicago area. Part of this, at least, was due to the fact that my creative ability, developed in early art schools, was stopped 'cold' by the depression, and fascinated by the sheer drama of working steam, the sounds, the shapes and the action, I turned to railroad modeling as a medium of expression for my own satisfaction.

"While born in Tulsa about the same time as the US Railroad Administration, I was quickly transplanted to Evanston, where I still live. Fortunately, I've managed to see most of the country by rail (with particular emphasis on the motive power) up until the present chaotic situation, and have made many 'private' fan-trips to see special operation firsthand.

"I was lucky to have been in service with the CMStP&P as a management trainee in the Perishable Freight and Refrigeration Dept. and furloughed to military service from the Office of Chief Engineer, M/W, PRR, Western Division. Upon being discharged at the end of the war with the Army as CO, 'A' Company, 651st Tank Destroyer Battalion, I took the opportunity to ride the 'tops' as a student headend-brakie through the Blue Mountains of Oregon. This was a time when the Union Pacific assigned five 'Bull-Mallies' to every ninety-car consist working out of LaGrande. In time I remembered the girl I left behind, and like Ulysses, completed my return from the wars.

"While railroading is in my blood, my hedonistic need for creature comforts, influenced probably, by early environmental conditioning, reduced me to being a professional architect during the intervening years. With a basement full of your personal HO empire, with a benevolent management, a never-faltering revenue, a dedicated operating crew hard at work in the 'Golden Age of Steam', I truly feel this beats the real thing."